

Message Text

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SUBJECT: COSTA RICAN REACTION TO SC MEETING

SUMMARY: COSTA RICAN PRESS GIVES HEAVY, BUT EVENHANDED
TREATMENT TO SC MEETING. PRESIDENT FIGUERES ALSO COMMENTS.
END SUMMARY

1. THE U. S. VETO WAS FRONT PAGE NEWS IN ALL COSTA RICAN PAPERS
ON MARCH 22 AND EARLIER PROCEEDINGS HAD BEEN PROMINENTLY
COVERED. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE NUMBER ONE NEWSPAPER
LA NACION, THE SAN JOSE PRESS CARRIED ONLY WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS
OF THE SC MEETING'S CLIMAX. THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL
COMMENT ON THE VETO, ALTHOUGH SOME EDITORIALS HAVE ADDRESSED
IN RECENT DAYS THE U. S./ PANAMANIAN CONFRONTATION IN THE SC
FORUM. LA NACION, WHICH SENT ITS ACE REPORTER DANILO ARIAS TO
COVER SC EVENTS, CARRIED BY FAR THE MOST COMPLETE COVERAGE.
ARIAS REPORTED THE MORE INTERESTING SPEECHES AND INCLUDED A
SERIES OF INTERVIEWS WITH KEOLPARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING.

2. LA NACION EDITORIALIZED ON MARCH 21 WHILE RUNNING ARIAS'
FAVORABLE FRONT PAGE LEAD ENTITLED " THE UNITED STATES IN AGREE-
MENT WITH A NEW CANAL TREATY", THAT WHILE " PERHAPS THE UN SC
MEETING HAS OPENED THE ONLY MUTUAL AND VIABLE ROAD TO AGREE-
MENT, THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN PANAMA AND THE U. S.", WAS IT
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REALLY NECESSARY, THE EDITOR QUESTIONED, FOR SOME FOREIGN MINISTRIES AND HEADS OF DELEGATIONS TO RAISE THEIR VOICES AS IF LATIN AMERICA WERE THREATENED BY A "A NEW COLONIALISM". THE EDITORIAL ENDED ASKING " WOULD THEY HAVE MET TO EXPOSE THE TRAGEDIES SUFFERED BY THE PEOPLES OF HUNGARY, EAST GERMANY, BULGARIA, ETC?".

3. DIARIO DE COSTA RICA IN ANOTHER EDITORIAL ARGUED THAT PANAMA' S SOVEREIGN ASPIRATIONS ARE LEGITIMATE AND JUST BUT TO FOCUS ON THE ISSUE IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL ONLY SERVES TO PIT ANTI- U. S. IDEOLOGICAL FORCES AGAINST THE U. S. THE SMALL NATIONS, THE EDITORIAL WENT ON, WHO RIGHTLY RESPECT PANAMA' S FULL SOVEREIGNTY ARE LEFT IN THE BACKWASH OF THE FILTH. THE PARADOX IN ALL THIS, DIARIO' S EDITOR JULIO SUNOL POINTS OUT, IS THAT WHILE TORRIJOS HAS A GOOD POSITION IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY, HE IS HIMSELF AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL USURPER OF POWER IN HIS COUNTRY. ".... IT (PANAMA) HAS LOST ITS INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY....". EDITOR SUNOL ARGUES THAT THE " LEGITIMATE CAUSE OF RECOVERING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE CANAL IS BEING USED (BY TORRIJOS) TO FORTIFY ANOTHER CAUSE WHICH IS LESS PURE". THE EDITORIAL GOES ON TO POINT OUT THAT TORRIJOS, WHO ASSUMED POWER UNCONSTITUTIONALLY, HAS TAKEN UPON HIMSELF INTERPRETING THE WILL OF THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE.

4. LA NACION GAVE A FULL REPORT OF ARIAS' INTERVIEW WITH COSTA RICAN UN AMBASSADOR JOSE LUIS MOLINA QUESADA, WHO HEADED THE GOCR DELEGATION UPON FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO' S DEPARTURE. MOLINA REPORTEDLY SAID " WE ASSUMED A HIGH POSITION, ONE WHICH SUPPORTED PANAMA, BUT WHICH NEITHER INSULTED NOR MALICIOUSLY ACCUSED THE UNITED STATES."

5. IN SUM, THE COSTA RICAN PRESS GENERALLY SEEMED TO BE IN STEP WITH THE GOCR' S OFFICIAL POSITION. THE PANAMANIAN APPEAR TO HAVE COSTA RICAN SUPPORT FOR A NEW TREATY MORE FAVORABLE TO PANAMA, BUT COSTA RICANS SEE NO ADVANTAGE TO ANTAGONIZING THE U. S. IN THE PROCESS.

6. PRESS HAS ALSO REPORTED PRESS CONFERENCE OF MARCH 22 AT WHICH PRESIDENT FIGUERES COMMENTED THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE U. S. IS DISPOSED TO SIGN A NEW CANAL TREATY WITH BETTER TERMS FOR PANAMA THAN THE PRESENT ONE.

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